

## **Appetizers for the Holidays**

I really enjoy all the decorations and activities of December but not how hectic and busy the month can become. That is why we decided to bring you some delicious recipes that are fairly quick and don't use a lot of ingredients. Need an appetizer in a pinch? You might have these ingredients in your refrigerator or pantry. Some people wait until the holidays to make some amazing complicated dishes. Not me, that's when I try and wow them with something quick, easy and delicious.

### **Butter Fingers**

½ lb. butter (margarine)

4 Tbsp. powdered sugar

2 cups flour (plain)

1 cup chopped nuts pecans (or other)

Cream the butter until fluffy and gradually add the sugar, then add the flour and nuts. Shape into bars like fingers, the size of an index. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Roll the bars in powdered sugar while still warm. Makes about 65 bars.

Lisa's Notes: My MaMa (Willa McCauley) always made these for Christmas. I remember going on the back porch and opening that tin to see those deliciously sweet cookies. Don't over bake them. You want them to be a light cream color and slightly golden brown on the ends.

### **Pecan Cranberry Rolls**

2 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese

1 cup NORTH CAROLINA GROWN PECANS – coarsely chopped

6 slices bacon – cooked crisp and crumbled

1 cup dried cranberries - coarsely chopped

½ cup green onions – thinly sliced

4 Large tortillas – plain, wheat, spinach, or sun dried tomato flavor

#### **To assemble:**

1. Combine all ingredients except tortillas
2. Spread mixture evenly among the tortillas

3. Roll up tightly, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 2 hours.
4. To serve cut in slices

Makes 32 appetizer servings.

Lisa's Notes: Gail Fuller of Raleigh took home first place in the NC Pecan Competition at this year's NC State Fair with this award winning recipe. I took these to a family function and they were a hit. Great flavor and so easy! I love them in the green tortilla wraps for Christmas.

### Sausage Balls

1 lb. hot sausage

10 oz. extra sharp cheddar, shredded

1 tsp. paprika

3 cups Bisquick

Texas Pete or Cayenne pepper to taste

Mix all the ingredients together. Form into bite size balls and place on a baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until brown on bottom.

Lisa's Notes: Who doesn't love a sausage ball? You can control the heat by the amount of Texas Pete or Cayenne pepper you add, or use a mild sausage. These are great for a party or breakfast social.

### Blue Cheese & Pear Bruschetta

6 slices of bacon, cooked and crumbled

4 oz. blue cheese, crumbled

1 baguette, cut into 1/4 inch slices

2 Tbsp. olive oil

1 8oz. cream cheese, softened

1 fresh pear, peeled and cut into thin slices

1/2 cup candied pecans, chopped

Brush the baguette slices with olive oil and place on a baking sheet. Broil the tops of the bread until lightly toasted. Let cool.

Combine cream cheese and blue cheese. Spread the cheese mixture on bread, top with pear slices, bacon and pecan pieces.

#### Sugar Coated Pecans

1 egg white

1-cup pecan pieces

½ cup sugar

½ tsp. salt

Beat one egg white and one Tbsp. of cold water together until frothy. Stir in 1 cup of pecan pieces into mixture. In another bowl, mix ½ cup of sugar and ½ tsp. of salt. Stir pecans into sugar mixture until well coated. Spread nuts on cookie sheet and bake at 275 for 15 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes.

Lisa's Notes: My sister Michelle came up with this delicious creation. The sweet pear, salty bacon and crunchy pecan are a perfect combination of flavors. In a pinch for time, you can now buy candied pecans in the grocery store. Check the isle with salad toppings.